

EXHIBIT 16

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND**

STATE OF MARYLAND; STATE OF
DELAWARE; STATE OF CALIFORNIA; STATE
OF COLORADO; STATE OF ARIZONA; STATE
OF CONNECTICUT; DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,
STATE OF HAWAI'I; STATE OF ILLINOIS;
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR *ex rel.* Andy
Beshear, in his official capacity as Governor of the
COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY; STATE OF
MAINE; COMMONWEALTH OF
MASSACHUSETTS; PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF
MICHIGAN; STATE OF MINNESOTA; STATE OF
NEVADA; STATE OF NEW JERSEY; STATE OF
NEW MEXICO; STATE OF NEW YORK; STATE
OF NORTH CAROLINA; STATE OF OREGON;
JOSH SHAPIRO, in his official capacity as
Governor of the COMMONWEALTH OF
PENNSYLVANIA; STATE OF RHODE ISLAND;
STATE OF VERMONT; STATE OF
WASHINGTON; STATE OF WISCONSIN;

Plaintiffs,

v.

CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND
COMMUNITY SERVICE, operating as
AmeriCorps; and JENNIFER BASTRESS
TAHMASEBI, in her official capacity as Interim
Head of the Corporation for National and
Community Service;

Defendants.

Civ. No. 25-cv-01363 (DLB)

DECLARATION OF KELLY MATTHEWS

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, I, Kelly Matthews, hereby declare as follows:

1. I am a resident of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. I am over the age of 18 and have personal knowledge of all the facts stated herein, except to those matters stated upon

information and belief; as to those matters, I believe them to be true. If called as a witness, I could and would testify competently to the matters set forth below.

2. I am currently employed by Framingham State University (FSU) as Professor of English and Director of the Framingham Teacher Residency AmeriCorps Program (FTR).

3. The FTR was established in 2022 and is a collaborative project led by FSU, in partnership with Framingham Public Schools (FPS), to recruit AmeriCorps members who take university courses at FSU and earn Massachusetts teacher licensure while serving alongside an experienced mentor teacher in FPS classrooms. The residency program runs for 10 months (August through the following June), aligning with the FPS academic year, and FTR members receive one year of AmeriCorps funding support.

4. As Director of the FTR AmeriCorps Program, I oversee the recruitment, onboarding, monitoring, supervision, and support of FTR AmeriCorps members; coordination of program services to increase impact on K-12 student outcomes; and visitations to each FTR school placement site at least once per week to conduct individual check-ins with FTR AmeriCorps members.

5. In 2022, FSU was awarded an AmeriCorps grant totaling \$1,690,696 from the Massachusetts Service Alliance to operate the FTR program. The grant was divided over three years, with \$539,999 allocated for the 2024-25 program year ending July 31, 2025. The AmeriCorps grant covers stipends for FTR participants; the costs of one (1) full-time administrator; stipends for FSU faculty and staff to provide additional data collection, licensure processing, and financial administration; textbooks for members' university courses; and required criminal history checks for all program staff, members, and mentor teachers.

6. Nine (9) FTR AmeriCorps members currently serve as resident teaching assistants in five (5) FPS elementary, middle, and high schools. Members focus on improving student engagement in the short term, with longer-range outcomes of decreased absenteeism and increased academic achievement. Members are paired with carefully selected mentor teachers to plan and teach lessons and mini-lessons, facilitate small-group classroom activities and large-group discussions, assist students individually, grade and comment on individual student work, carry out classroom administrative duties, and communicate with students' families. With training and supervision from FSU faculty, each FTR AmeriCorps member gradually takes on full responsibility for teaching 75%-80% of their mentor's classes by the end of their residency, and thereby earns Massachusetts teacher licensure in elementary education (grades 1-6); a specific subject area such as Mathematics, Science, History, English, or World Languages (grades 5-12); or special needs education, in accordance with Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) requirements.

7. Between 2022 and 2024, our first two years operating as an AmeriCorps program, FTR has demonstrated positive results on FPS student academic engagement. Of the 1,089 K-12 students served by FTR AmeriCorps members who completed the "Check and Connect" survey, a validated, research-based assessment instrument, 71% showed improvement in academic engagement.

8. Additionally, 15 of the 20 members in our first two AmeriCorps member cohorts (2022-23 and 2023-24) gained employment as classroom teachers (10 in Framingham, 4 in other districts, 1 in the Department of Youth Services), and 2 gained employment as full-time paraprofessionals in Framingham Public Schools.

9. On April 27, 2025, I received a grant termination notice via email from Beth McGuinness, the CEO of the Massachusetts Service Alliance, the designated State Service Commission for Massachusetts that administers our AmeriCorps funding.

10. The termination notice instructed me to advise our AmeriCorps members to cease work on their projects. However, due to the structure of our program, FTR members are enrolled in full-time Education courses at FSU, which require them to complete their current, full-time Practicum semester. Therefore, they are expected to continue to serve and teach in their assigned FPS classrooms for the remainder of the school year. FTR members have approximately one week remaining of FSU coursework, and approximately 6-7 weeks remaining in their assigned FPS classrooms.

Impacts on FTR AmeriCorps Members

11. Our AmeriCorps funding provides a living allowance, health insurance, and childcare costs for members who would not otherwise be able to participate in a university-based teacher licensure program due to economic barriers. This builds upon FSU's commitment to educational access for all members of society regardless of their socioeconomic standing. Further, it continues a long-standing tradition of preparing teachers harkening back to the University's founding in 1839.

12. Due to the termination of AmeriCorps funding, FTR members will lose the remainder of their annual stipends, valued at \$27,610 per member (for a total of \$248,490 for all 9 AmeriCorps members), that support these members' essential needs such as food, housing and family support. To date, approximately seventy five percent of the stipend amounts have been paid to each of the students for the current fiscal year, meaning that each AmeriCorps member will lose approximately \$6,600 in support they expected to receive. Losing childcare support means

some FTR participants will not be able to report to their worksites and continue their classroom responsibilities. AmeriCorps members enrolled in undergraduate or graduate coursework at FSU may be forced to withdraw, leaving their own education incomplete and depriving the classrooms where they served of quality teachers.

13. Students qualifying for an FTR AmeriCorps position must demonstrate capability, enthusiasm and intent to become licensed teachers. Most applicants have faced economic barriers that the AmeriCorps program will help to offset and move them closer to their desired goal. Without AmeriCorps funding and programmatic supports, these barriers are raised again when students were already on a clear path towards professional success.

Impacts on FPS and Students Served by FTR Members

14. FTR AmeriCorps members' withdrawal would also impact the 318 students currently being served by our members in 5 elementary, middle, and high schools, because the students would no longer benefit from the teaching and support that had been provided by our AmeriCorps members. The FTR student teachers have been in place since last August and have established strong professional relationships with their students and teacher mentors. The removal of these influential teachers will have a profound negative impact on the students in the classrooms, the FTR teachers' practicum experience and the educators in the Framingham Public Schools who have supported and nurtured both students and teachers alike. Particularly at this stage in the academic year when the instructional staff and their students are preparing to begin their final lessons of the school year and prepare students for their next level of schooling, this change will alter the rhythm of the classroom that is so vital to student success.

15. The FTR AmeriCorps program prioritizes recruitment of members who speak Portuguese or Spanish, in alignment with the demographics of the communities that FSU serves,

such that 50% of our current members and alumni are bilingual and/or Hispanic. Since its inception in 2022, FTR has successfully trained Hispanic teacher candidates who are now employed as FPS teachers, contributing to the increased proportion of Hispanic teachers within the total staff population in the district to better serve students and families. The termination or reduction of the FTR program will result in fewer educators who represent the broader student population in the district.

Impacts on FSU

16. The loss of AmeriCorps funding also adversely impacts FSU. FTR members forced to withdraw will decrease overall enrollment at FSU. FTR members enrich the learning environments of their undergraduate or graduate classrooms by introducing new perspectives and experiences from the residency program, all of which will be lost if members do not continue their coursework.

17. Unless the AmeriCorps funding is restored, FSU faculty who are assigned with administrative responsibilities associated with this grant will either suspend their work or continue without compensation, creating a challenging situation as they are union employees. FSU cannot request or require that their work continues as it would violate the current collective bargaining agreement.

18. Of the \$539,999 in AmeriCorps grant funds allocated to the current program year, we currently have \$191,979 remaining that have not been expended. Our AmeriCorps grant is administered on a cost-reimbursement basis, so costs are submitted monthly to our State Service Commission, the Massachusetts Service Alliance for payment. Currently, FSU has submitted \$58,908.98 in costs that have not been paid. FSU has additional costs that have already been

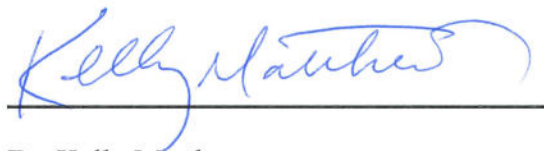
incurred but yet to be submitted. As a result of the grant termination, we no longer have the ability to draw down on AmeriCorps funds to cover these costs.

19. FSU does not have access to any other funding that would replace our AmeriCorps grant.

20. FSU has completed and submitted its grant application for AmeriCorps funding for the FY2025 through FY2028 program years, but we have received no updates on the status of our application. Without this funding, the FTR program cannot continue to operate.

21. It is my firm declaration that the reduction in AmeriCorps staffing and program support have harmed and will harm FSU and the communities served by the AmeriCorps program that FSU administers.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on May 1, 2025, at Framingham, Massachusetts.



Dr. Kelly Matthews
Professor and Director of the Framingham
Teacher Residency AmeriCorps Program